स्नो एंड एवेलांश स्टडी इस्टैब्लिशमेंट कार्यालय को स्थानांतरित न किया जाना

592. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह:** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को हिमाचल प्रदेश के मनाली-कुल्लू जिला स्थित स्नो एंड एवेलांश स्टडी इस्टैब्लिशमेंट आफिस को मनाली से चंडीगढ़ स्थानान्तरित न करने से संबंधित 9 अक्तूबर, 1996 का कोई पत्र मिला है,

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में क्या कार्रवाई की गई है, और

(ग) किन कारणों से इस संस्थान के कार्यालय एक के बाद एक मनाली से चंडीगढ़ स्थानान्तरित किए जा रहे हैं जबकि हिम और हिमस्खलन से संबंधित अध्ययन का कार्यक्षेत्र ऐसे क्षेत्र हैं जहां पर हिमपात होता है और इस प्रकार इस दृष्टिकोण से मनाली सही स्थान है?

रक्षा मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री एन०वी०एन० सोमू): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) और (ग) हिम तथा हिमस्खलन से संबंधित आंकड़े एकत्र करने के काम में लाए जाने वाली हिम तथा हिमस्खलन अध्ययन स्थापना की वेधशालाओं को हिमालय की ऊंची पहाड़ियों पर उनके मौजूदा स्थानों से शिफ्ट नहीं किया गया है। हिम तथा हिमस्खलन अध्ययन स्थापना का मनाली स्थित कार्यालय ब्यास नदी के द्वारा अपनाए गए नए मार्ग के पास स्थित है। हाल ही में आई बाढ़ से मनाली स्थित हिम तथा हिमस्खलन अध्ययन स्थापना के भवनों तथा अन्य आधारभूत सुविधाओं को भारी नुकसान पहुंचा है। इसलिए मनाली स्थित कर्यालय, जो वेधशाला के आंकड़ों के विश्लेषण तथा भूस्खलन के पूर्वानुमान के लिए प्रशासनिक तथा तकनीकी सहायता प्रदान करता है, को अस्थाई तौर पर रामगढ़ पंचकुला में रक्षा अनुसंधान एवं विकास संगठन की सहयोगी प्रयोगशाला के परिसर में तब तक के लिए स्थानांतरित कर दिया गया है जब तक कि व्यवहार्य स्थान के बारे में अंतिम निर्णय लिया जाता है।

Relations with Nepal

593. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to establish better relations with Nepal;

(b) if so, the various steps taken by Government in that regard;

(c) the steps taken to establish better economic relations between both the countries; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There is a constant endeavour to strengthen and diversify bilateral relations with Nepal. In the past year, high level visits have been exchanged between the two countries. The External Affairs Minister visited Nepal in January 1996 followed by the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to india in February 1996 and the visit of the Foreign Minister of Nepal to India in August 1996. During these visits an extensive exchange of views and a detailed review of bilateral relations took place.

(c) In August 1996, the High Level Task Force (HLTF) met in New Delhi to have a project-wise review of economic relations between the two countries. The major ongoing projects being implemented with Government of India assistance include the setting up of a medical college and institute at Dharan, and the construction of 22 bridges on the East-West Highway in Western Nepal. Further, additional locomotives and coaches have been supplied to strengthen services on the Jayanagar-Janakpur railway sector. Work on surveys for outer ring road at Janakpur, broad-gauging of rail link between Raxaul and Sirsia, as well as other projects have been initiated.

(d) During the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India in February 1996, the "Treaty concerning the integrated Development of the Mahakali River including Sarada Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheshwar project" was concluded. This Treaty envisages implementation of the concerned projects jointly by India and Nepal. These projects on completion would yield significant benefits to both

countries. Steps are already under way to follow up on the necessary activities to commence implementation of the various projects. In addition, a liberalised trade regime to enhance bilateral commercial exchanges in general and Nepal's exports to India in particular, is being facilitated.

Proposal to issue Tax Free Road Bonds

594. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the answer to U.Q. 3749 given in Rajya Sabha on 11th September, 1996 and state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under considertion of Government to issue Tax Free Road Bonds on the lines of Railway Bonds; and

(b) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal is at conceptual stage sand it is too early to indicate the details thereof.

Break-Down of Telecom Facilities in West Godavari District

595. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a total break-down of telecom facilities in November, 1996 due to cyclone in West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether any steps have been taken to restore such telecom facilities in West Godavari district;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the machinery available during such emergency to restore telecom facilities due to frequent break-downs in telecom operations in rural areas; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) There has been a large scale break-down of telecom facilities in West godawari District of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) and (c) The restoration work is in progress on war footing. Resources have also been diverted from all over the country to restore services.Following restoration works have already been completed;

(i) No. of local exchanges restored completely— 82 out of 137.

(ii) No. of exchanges restored partially — 55. These will be fully restored as soon as AC Power Supply is restored by Electricity Authorities and trunk lines are repaired.

(iii) No. of local lines restored— 7488 out of 13528 affected.

(iv) No. of STD statiens— 62 out of 88.

(v) No. of Trunk systems restored— 39 out of 70.

(d) and (e) In rural areas whenever major break-downs occur due to natural calamities like floods and cyclones men and materials are diverted from nearby Divisions for immediate restorations. For restoring the trunk systems quickly, Digital Radio systems are installed as far as feasible for giving immediate relief.

Speedy Transmission of Mails

596. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking steps for the speedy transmission of parcels, money orders and mails;

(b) whether Government have also been making efforts to deliver the parcels, money orders and letters expeditiously; and

(c) if so, the progress made as on date and by when these services are expected to be the modernised in the entire country?